

THE COSMIC MULTIPLICATIONS.

BY LAWRENCE PARMLY BROWN.

THE extant stories of miraculous multiplication or increase of things in number or quantity were evidently suggested by the natural phenomena of reproduction and growth in the animal and vegetable kingdoms; the solar or soli-cosmic father-god being the great multiplier as the active or spiritual factor in nature, while the function of the earth-mother appears to have been considered of such a purely passive character that she is generally ignored in the multiplication stories that have come down to us.

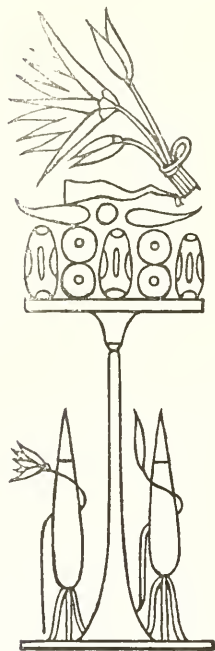
In the Old Testament we find Jehovah as the great multiplier, especially of men (Gen. xvi. 10; xvii. 2, 20; Ex. xxxii. 13; Ezek. xvi. 7; etc.). Habakkuk says to him: "Thou makest men as the fishes of the sea" (i. 14—the Heb. *dag* = fish, from *dagah* = to multiply, being "so called from multiplying abundantly"; Gesenius, *in voc.*). Ezekiel makes Jehovah say: "And I will multiply upon you man and beast. . . . and I will call for the corn, and will multiply it (A. V., 'increase it') And I will multiply the fruit of the tree and the increase of the field" (xxxvi. 11, 29, 30). In Ps. iv. 7, it is said to the Lord: "Thou hast put gladness in my heart more than in the time that their corn and their wine multiplied (A. V., 'increased')." In 1 Kings xvii. 8-16, a "handful of meal in a barrel and a little oil in a cruse" are miraculously multiplied or increased from day to day, as "the Lord God of Israel" promised Elijah, thus for many days feeding not only the prophet but also the poor widow of Zarephthah and her son who dies and is restored to life by Elijah (doubtless for the solar child born of the widowed earth-mother in the fruitless winter season, in which he also dies to be resurrected in the spring as the season of nature's multiplications). This story reappears in a variant form in 2 Kings iv. 1-7, where Elisha multiplies the oil of another poor widow, who has two sons (apparently for the sun and moon); many vessels being

miraculously filled from the widow's single pot of oil, so she is able to sell the product and pay her creditor, thus saving her sons from being sold into bondage. Again, in 2 Kings iv. 42-44, Elisha multiplies twenty barley loaves and a quantity of grain in a sack, so there was more than enough to feed a hundred men, as the Lord had promised. Closely related miracles are those in which God feeds the Israelites by sending great numbers of quails and vast quantities of manna for bread, far more than enough for the wants of the people. The casual reference to the sending of the quails, before the manna, was probably not in the original story of Ex. xvi, where it is only on the manna that the people are fed during the forty years in the wilderness; while in Num. xi we find allusions to the sending of the manna, with no account of the miracle, as if it were too well known to need repetition—the story of the sending of the quails, after the manna, being here given in detail as if entirely new to the reader. The Jews expected that the Messiah would repeat the manna miracle, for we read in the *Midrash Koheleth* (fol. 73): "What knowest thou of the first Saviour (Moses)? He made manna come down. . . . So will also the last Saviour make manna come down."

In the *Ramayana* is a wonderful story of miraculous feeding through the magic art of the hermit Bharadvaja, and in answer to his prayers to the gods. The hero Bharata and his army, a "mighty multitude," are provided with a sumptuous banquet in the forest retreat of the hermit, which is transformed to a grassy plain; and not only are all kinds of meats, fruits, and other foods produced, but new rivers run with wine and other drinks; a palace and many mansions appear, music is heard, dancing girls come from heaven, etc. (II, 91). It is said that the *Fo-pen-hing-tsi-king*, a Chinese life of Gautama Buddha, relates that this last Buddha declared that when one of his predecessors visited a king Sudarsana in his city of Jambunada, he attended a wedding and not only kept the foods and drinks undiminished during the feast, but caused the host's uninvited kinsmen to come and partake of it, even as the host had silently wished (*Lillie, Buddhism in Christianity*, pp. 168-170; *Popular Life of Buddha*, pp. 305-6). The multiplication of food was one of the feats of the Hindu and Egyptian magicians. The Mogul emperor Jahangir tells us in his *Memoirs* (p. 98) that some magicians made a large cauldron boil without fire, and placing upon it a small quantity of rice, drew out a hundred platters full, each with a stewed fowl on top; and Celsus referred to the Egyptian magicians as "exhibiting sumptuous banquets, and tables cov-

ered with food, which have no reality" (Origen, *Contra Celsum*, I, 68). According to Ovid, when Jupiter and Mercury dined with Philemon and Baucis, those aged people were astonished to "behold the goblet, when drunk off, replenishing itself of its own accord, and the wine to increase of itself" (*Met.*, VIII, 675).

We thus find that the mythic multiplication was especially associated with the production of food and drink, of which the sun-god is generally conceived as the giver. In Ps. cxxxvi. 25 Jehovah is he "who giveth food to all flesh." Macrobius says that Apollo has



EGYPTIAN ALTAR
with ten loaves of
bread.*

the epithet Nomian (= Pasturing, Feeding) not alone because he fed the cattle of Admetus, but also because the sun feeds all things. In an Egyptian invocation to the sun it is said to him: "Fill us with thy splendors. We taste thy meat, we swallow thy drink"; while in another text we read: "My heart is tranquil through thy bread, receiving thy food... off the table of the god Aur" (Bonwick, *Eg. Bel.*, p. 281—cf. the Heb. *aur* = light, put for the sun in Job. xxxi. 26). The mythic table is doubtless the earth; probably being represented by the Ethiopian "table of the sun" situated in a meadow where the people were feasted in the daytime on cooked meats, supposing "that the earth itself, from time to time, produced these things"—whereas Herodotus says that the magistrates supplied the "table" with food by night (III, 18). In the *Book of the Dead* much importance is attached to the loaves of wheat and barley eaten by the deceased in the celestial field Aarru' (XCIX, CIX, both Recensions), where he drinks beer or ale (CXXIV) and also milk, and has "plenty of meat"

(CXXII). In the Theban Recension of CXXIV, 9, "the bread of Seb," the earth-god, appears to be the food of the living, and loaves of bread have a prominent place among the Egyptian food offerings. In the rubric to Chap. CXL, *Book of the Dead*, we find four altars for the sun-god Ra, and four for other gods, upon each of which, among other things, are loaves of bread and cakes in groups of five: and ten loaves appear to be indicated on some Egyptian altars, although only seven are seen in the front elevation—as in the Judg-

* From Lepsius, *Todtenbuch der Aegypter*, Plate L.

ment Hall, *Book of the Dead*, illustration to CXXV, Saïte Recension, Turin Papyrus (in Lepsius, *Todtenbuch der Aegypter*, Plate L). In 1 Sam. xxi. 3-6, the hungry David receives five loaves of shew-bread from the priest, and *ibid.* xvii. 17, he takes ten loaves to his brethren in the camp; while it is possible that the Israelites substituted their twelve loaves of shew-bread for an original group of ten or twice five—as on the Egyptian altars. Elisha's twenty barley loaves (apparently multiplied five times to feed a hundred men) may have been suggested by an Egyptian grouping of five loaves on each of four altars, somewhat as in Chap. CXL, *Book of the Dead* (cited above).

In Ps. cxlvi. 7, it is Jehovah (elsewhere the multiplier) who "giveth food to the hungry"; while in the Gospels the multiplier of food is Jesus, whom Matthew, Luke, and John (but not Mark) represent as the son of Joseph—perhaps because the name Joseph, supposed to signify "Adding" or "Multiplying" (as in Gen. xxx. 22; cf. xlix. 22-26), was adopted for the human father of Jesus as a terrestrial counterpart of the latter's heavenly father. In the Gospels there are two miraculous multiplications of food by Jesus, obviously mere variants; one with five loaves and two fishes and five thousand persons fed; the other with four thousand persons, seven loaves and a few small fishes. Both appear in Mark and Matthew, but only the former in Luke (and in John with added elements). The earliest extant versions are doubtless those of Mark, and their Old Testament type is certainly found in Elisha's multiplication of twenty loaves and a quantity of grain, as was recognized by some of the Christian Fathers (e.g., Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.*, IV, 21). Moreover, there are reasons for concluding that Mark's version relating to the five loaves and two fishes was the later of the two in origin and a Greek Christian production, while his variant version relating to the seven loaves and a few small fishes was the earlier in origin and a production of the primitive Jewish Christians, with its most prominent details suggested by a Hebrew or Aramaic text of the Old Testament type. According to the extant Hebrew text, (the solar) Elisha (= God-Saviour) returned to Gilgal (= Circle) in a time of dearth and famine—"And there came a man from Baal-shalisha and brought the man of God (Elisha) bread of the first-fruits, twenty loaves of barley (a food of the poor), and garden grain in a sack (new Jewish English Version, 'and fresh ears of corn in a sack'; A. V., 'and full ears of corn in the husk thereof'; Sept., 'and cakes of figs'). And he (Elisha) said, Give unto the people that they may eat. And his servant (Gehazi) said, How should I set this before a hundred men? But he (Elisha) said, Give to the people,

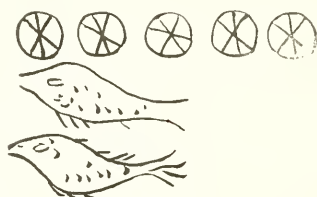
that they may eat; for thus saith the Lord, They shall eat and shall leave thereof. So he (Gehazi) set it before them, and they did eat, and left thereof, according to the word of the Lord" (2 Kings iv. 38, 42-44; cf. the Roman custom that something should be left on the table after meals—Plutarch, *Rom. Quaes.*, 64—perhaps for the household gods). The Hebrew word for the grain in the sack is *carmel*, which signifies "grain grown in garden-like plantations" as distinguished from field grain; but as the usual word for the latter is *dagan*, while *dagon* in Hebrew is "a little fish" (from *dag* = a fish as a multiplier), it is not improbable that the "few small fishes" of the Gospel miracle were suggested by Elisha's multiplied grain—the word *dagan* perhaps being found in some Aramaic version or paraphrase of 2 Kings. But the word *dag* (DG, without the vowel points) has the numerical value of $4 + 3 = 7$, which suggests the possibility that the "few small fishes" were originally "seven." In the Old Testament there is another Hebrew word for grain, *sheber* (Gen. xlii-xlvii and Amos viii. 5), while *sheba* and *shibah* are the usual words for "seven"; and as these words are almost exactly alike in pronunciation, it is probable that we have here the primary suggestion for the Gospel seven loaves as associated with the "few small fishes." Furthermore, we find "seven ears of grain" (*sheba shibboleth*) in Gen. xli. 5; and while there does not appear to be any typical group of seven loaves, nevertheless in some Egyptian representations the loaves are piled on an altar in such a way that only seven are seen in the front elevation, although ten appear to be indicated (see above).

Multiplication by a thousand frequently occurs in mythology and cyclic chronology, and a thousand is often put for a large number, as in Ps. xc. 4, and 2 Peter iii. 8. Thus the concept of the multiplied "small fishes" naturally leads to the prophecy of Is. lx. 22, where it is said of Israel: "The smallest shall become a thousand (Sept., 'thousands') and the least a mighty nation," while according to the Hebrew of Judges xx. 2 (cf. 17), "the chiefs of all the people, of all the tribes of Israel, presented them in the assembly of the people of God, four hundred thousand footmen that drew the sword." Of course, this gives far too great a number for the multitude in the Gospel miracle, but it may have been reduced to the "four thousand" of the original story of the multiplication of the seven loaves and a few small fishes. But, again, there is a possibility that four thousand was recognized by some as the number of the stars or angels as mythic star figures; for according to the Assyrian account of the Revolt in Heaven, the whole number of the

celestial host was originally five thousand, of whom a thousand revolted, thus leaving four thousand in heaven (*Records of the Past*, VIII, pp. 127-128; cf. VII, p. 128). According to both Josephus (*Antiq.*, XVIII, 1, 5) and Philo (*Quod Omnis Probus Liber*, 15), the Essenes at the beginning of the Christian era numbered about four thousand; which has led some commentators to connect the Gospel miracle with that Jewish sect. The scene of the Gospel story was naturally laid in a desert place, where food for a multitude could not readily be procured by ordinary means; and it was in a desert that the manna (for bread) and quails (for meat) were sent to the Israelites, but not by a multiplication miracle. Elisha's miracle belongs to Gilgal (= Circle), and the Gospel "desert place" is connected with the Sea of Galilee (= Circle), necessarily being assigned to the desert country on the eastern shore; and the name Elisha signifies "God-Saviour," while Jesus signifies "Saviour."

According to Mark vii. 3, Jesus "came to the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the borders of Decapolis," on the eastern shore, where he evidently multiplied the seven loaves and the small fishes (viii. 1-9). The story is as follows: "In those days, the multitude being very great, and not having what they may eat, Jesus, having called his disciples to him, he says to them, I am moved with compassion on the multitude, because already three days they continue with me and have not what they may eat. . . . And his disciples answered him, Whence shall any one be able to satisfy these (people) with bread here in a desert? And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven, and he ordered the multitude to recline on the ground. And having taken the seven loaves, having given thanks (as did the Jews both before and after meals), he broke and gave (them) to his disciples, that they might set (them) before (the multitude). And they set (them) before the multitude. And they had a few small fishes (*ἰχθῦδια*—probably salted and dried) and having blessed (them), he desired these also to be set before (the multitude). And they ate and were satisfied. And they took up of superfluous fragments seven baskets. And those who had eaten were about four thousand; and he (Jesus) sent them away." Matthew alone repeats this story (xv. 32-38), but lays the scene on a mountain, still to the east of the Sea of Galilee, and describes Jesus as having healed the "lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others" of the multitude before the feeding—"And they who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children." The three days in both Gospels, during which the multitude appears to have been without food, may have been suggested by the three

days' fast ordered by Esther (Esth. iv. 16; cf. 1 Sam. xxx. 12, 13, where a young Egyptian has nothing to eat or drink for three days). Mark's "about four thousand" persons, and Matthew's "four thousand men, besides women and children," agree well enough as a reduction of the number in Judges xx. 2, where only the swordsmen of the Israelites made up the four hundred thousand; and four thousand is the number of the Assyrian celestial host after the revolt of a thousand. The twelve disciples set the multiplied food before the people, as if to symbolize the distribution of natural food products throughout the year; the disciples thus corresponding to the Twelve Happy Ones who are the bearers of food in the Egyptian "Book of Hades" (*Records of the Past*, X, pp. 116-119). As in the story of Elisha, whose servant Gehazi sets the multiplied food before the people, so also in the Gospel story there is a superfluity—seven baskets full in the latter, in agreement with the number of loaves. As to Matthew's mountain, it may have been sug-



THE GOSPEL FIVE LOAVES AND TWO FISHES.

(In the Cemetery of Hermes, Catacombs, Rome.)

gested by his own and perhaps the true interpretation of Baal-shalisha, from which place came the man who brought the loaves and grain to Elisha; for Baal = Lord, and *shalisha* is conjectured to signify a "triangle," but perhaps refers to a pyramid-like mountain.

According to the variant story in Mark vi. 30-44, the twelve disciples, having returned from their proselyting tour, are taken by Jesus in a ship to a desert place on the east of the Sea of Galilee; a multitude of people following by land. Jesus proceeds to teach this multitude until a late hour, when he is asked by the disciples to dismiss the people so they may buy bread. "But he answering, said to them, Give ye to them to eat. And they say to him, Having gone, shall we buy two hundred denarii (worth) of bread (about \$29 worth, as perhaps suggested by Abigail's present to David of 200 loaves and 200 fig-cakes—1 Sam. xxv. 18), and give them to eat? And he says to them, How many loaves have ye? go and see.

And having known, they say, Five, and two fishes (*ixθύας*—probably salted and dried). And he ordered them to make all (the people) recline by companies on the green grass (although the scene is laid in a desert place). And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds and by fifties (corresponding to the minor divisions of the Jewish armies—2 Kings i. 14; xi. 4, 10). And having taken the five loaves and the two fishes, having looked up to heaven, he blessed (probably 'blessed God', as in the Jewish thanksgiving before and after meals) and broke the loaves, and gave (them) to his disciples that they might eat before them (i. e., previously to the people; but the original text probably had: 'that they might set them before the multitude'). And the two fishes he divided among all. And all ate and were satisfied. And they took up of fragments (of the loaves) twelve baskets full, and of the fishes. And those that ate of the loaves (and fishes) were about five thousand"—with the word "about" wanting in some manuscripts, as in the Sinaitic Palimpsest. Matthew (xiv. 13-21) has substantially the same story somewhat abbreviated—"And having broken (them), he gave the loaves to the disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. And all ate and were satisfied; and they took up all that was superfluous of the fragments, twelve hand-baskets full. And those who ate were men about five thousand, besides women and children"—as also in Matthew's feeding of the four thousand. Luke also has substantially the same story (ix. 10-19); but he adds that the desert place was "of a city called Bethsaida"—perhaps for the Septuagint Bethsarisa (= Baal-shalisha) in Elisha's miracle. The Gospel multitude appears to have been reckoned at five thousand to give a thousand for each of the five loaves as found on Egyptian altars. Everything relating to the fishes has some appearance of being interpolated in the original story of Mark vi. 30-44; but be this as it may, the primary concept of the two fishes was probably that of a pair, male and female, as suggested by the Hebrew *dag* = a fish, "so called from multiplying abundantly." And it is also probable that the hypothetical Greek Christian author of this later of the two multiplication stories recognized the two fishes as types or counterparts of those of Pisces—as do the astronomizing Postellus (*Signorum Coelestium*, p. 13), Bartschius (*Planisphaerium Stellatum*, p. 95), and Caesius (*Coelum Astronomico-Poeticum*, p. 103). Pisces became the sign of the spring equinox at about the beginning of the Christian era; and in accordance with the nature mythos, the Gospel multitude appears to have been conceived as fasting in the desert of winter, and being fed, under Pisces, as they reclined on "the green grass"

of spring. But as the sun is sometimes conceived as a fish swimming through the celestial sea (whence come such man-fish deities as Oannes or Odakon), it is not improbable that the two Gospel fishes were originally symbols of the sun and moon, with the five (circular) loaves for the five other planets. And thus, too, the seven (circular) loaves in the earlier Gospel story may have been referred to the seven planets, including the sun and moon—which are otherwise symbolized by seven fishes, as apparently in the representation of Dionysus (himself a solar figure) sailing over the celestial sea in a fish-shaped boat and surrounded by seven fishes (see frontispiece). The frequent employment in the Roman catacombs of the two Gospel fishes and the five or seven loaves, either separately or together, suggests that they were sometimes recognized as celestial food for the dead Christians.

In John's multiplication miracle (vi. 1-15) we find the later story of Mark recast throughout, with several variations and additions; the scene being on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee, on a mountain (as in Matthew's feeding of the four thousand), and the time being "near the passover, the feast of the Jews" (which belongs to about the time of the spring equinox). Seeing the multitude, Jesus says to Philip, "Whence shall we buy loaves that these may eat?... Philip answered him, Loaves for two hundred denarii are not sufficient for them, that each of them may receive some little. Says to him one of his disciples, Andrew the brother of Simon Peter, A little boy is here, who has five barley loaves (barley as in Elisha's miracle, primarily as a food of the poor) and two small fishes (*ὀψάρια*, small fishes *boiled*, according to the etymology of the word); but what are these for so many? And Jesus said, Make the men recline. Now much grass was in that place: reclined therefore the men, the number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves, and having given thanks, distributed (them) to the disciples, and the disciples to those reclining; and in like manner of the small fishes, as much as they (the people) wished. And when they were filled, he says to the disciples, Gather together the superfluous fragments, that nothing may be lost. They gathered together, therefore, and from the five barley loaves filled twelve hand-baskets of fragments that were superfluous to those who had eaten. The men, therefore, having seen what sign (A.V., 'miracle') Jesus had done, said, This is truly the prophet that is coming into the world. Jesus, therefore, knowing that they were about to come and seize him, that they may make him king, withdrew again to a mountain himself alone." Luke's identification of

the scene as a desert place "of the city of Bethsaida," doubtless suggested John's introduction of Philip and Andrew the brother of Simon Peter, for "Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter," according to John i. 45. The desire of the people to make Jesus a king is peculiar to John's story, although in one prophetic view, to which there are frequent allusions in the Gospels, the Messiah was to be King of the Jews; and according to the *Infancy of the Saviour*, when Jesus was between seven and twelve years old, he was crowned with flowers and adored as a king by the other boys, in the month Adar (41; cf. 36 and 50 for his age). Adar, the Babylonian Addaru, was the twelfth month in the Hebrew sacred year, falling under Pisces, the sign of the two fishes; but the early Christians naturally may have considered it the first month of the astronomical year, as the spring equinox retrograded into Pisces at about the beginning of the Christian era. The barley harvest in Palestine belongs to the time of that equinox, to which time John's barley loaves appear to belong, as he places the miracle "near the passover," which was celebrated at the new moon of Nisan, the month following Adar; and he also may have identified Bethsaida = Fishing-town as a terrestrial counterpart of Pisces. His "little boy," who furnishes the loaves and fishes, in all probability was originally a figure of the young sun in Pisces as the first spring sign: this "little boy" being given the place of the man from Baal-shalisha in Elisha's miracle—and of course being a mythic duplication of the boy Jesus adored as a king in the month Adar. In Kircher's Egyptian "Zodiac of the Second Hermes," the solar infant is figured in the hand of a fish-tailed woman for Pisces (*Oedipus Aegyptiacus*, Vol. II, Part II, p. 160).

In the apocryphal *Acts of John* it is said that whenever Jesus and the Apostles dined with a Pharisee, and a loaf of bread was given to each, Jesus blessed and divided his loaf so that it served miraculously to fill them all. According to the *Gospel of Thomas* (Latin form, 1), when Jesus was three years old "he took a dried (salted) fish, and put it into a dish, and ordered it to move about. And it began to move about. And he said again to the fish, Throw out thy salt which thou hast, and walk into the water. And it so came to pass." In Herodotus IX. 20, there is a similar story of a salt fish, which, while being broiled, "lying on the fire, leapt and quivered like fish just being caught." A Mohammedan legend relates that Fatema, the Prophet's daughter, once brought him two loaves and a piece of meat, and that he returned them to her on a dish that had become full of bread and meat (Al Beidawi, in Sale's

Koran, III, p. 40, note). According to another Mohammedan legend, in answer to a prayer of Jesus, God sent two clouds from heaven bearing a golden table upon which was a silver dish containing a great cooked fish: and to show a still greater marvel, Jesus commanded the fish to live, whereupon it began to move, but again became a cooked fish, feeding thirteen thousand persons without being in the least diminished; for all that was cut off was miraculously reproduced in an instant. Again, in a variant Mohammedan legend of Jesus, a heavenly table during forty days descends on the clouds at daybreak and ascends at sunset (see Donchoo, *Apoc. and Legend. Life of Christ*, pp. 226-229).

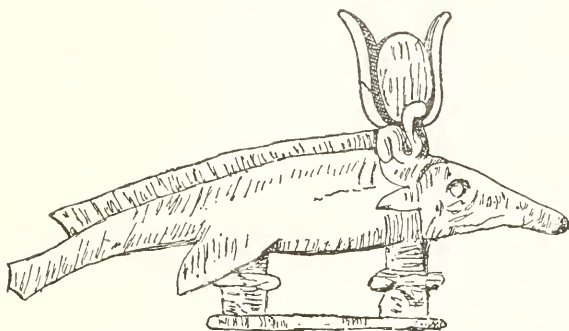
In the nature mythos a multitudinous draught of fishes is referable primarily to the stars in the net of night, and secondarily to all the celestial bodies as drawn forth in a net from the underworld



TWO EGYPTIAN ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE COSMIC FISH-NET.
(In the Papyrus of Nu, Theban Recension of the *Book of the Dead*, Chap. CLIII, A and B, vignettes; from Budge, *Book of the Dead*, ed. 1901, II, pp. 510 and 515.)

sea to the upper heaven, of course over the eastern horizon. A recital of Chap. CLIII of the *Book of the Dead* enabled the deified deceased to avoid capture in this mythic net and also to use it for the purpose of providing himself with both birds and fishes for food. In the Theban Recension of CLIII, A, the deceased says: "I go fishing with the cordage (= net) of 'the uniter of the earth,' and of him that maketh a way through (= under) the earth. Hail, ye fishers....who lay snares with your nets and go about in the chambers of the waters (Saïte parallel, 'who fish those who move amidst the waters'), take ye not me in the net wherewith ye ensnared the helpless fiends....let me rise up like the god Sebek, and let me make a flight to you away from the snare of the fowler whose fingers are hidden....I snare with the net....I know the net" (2-7, 18, 27). In the same Recension of CLIII, B, the deceased says: "Know ye that I know the name of the great and

mighty net? 'Anket' (= Clincher) is its name....Know ye that I know the name of the fishers? 'Ape' is their name (the vignette showing three apes, probably cloud figures, drawing the net full of fishes)....Know ye that I know the name of the fowler (for the net also catches birds)? 'Prince, mighty one who sitteth on the eastern side of heaven' is his name....I rise up as Ra, the lord of the East (the Saïte has: 'I escape from them under the shape of the hawk of Horus')....I have come into heaven, I embrace my seat which is in the East...." (3-11, 16, 17). Pisces is an eastern sign, and in all probability the crocodile god Sebek was identified by some of the Egyptians with the constellated sea-monster Cetus, which is closely connected with Pisces. And thus in Chap. CXIII of the *Book of the Dead*, Sebek is the fisher with the net, "and strong is that net"; Ra saying that "there are fish with the



THE EGYPTIAN OXYRHYNCUS

with soli-lunar crest. (From a bronze in the Louvre, Paris.)

god Sebek, and he hath found (and brought in) the hands and arms of Horus for him, in the land of fish" (Theban, 4, 5—the Saïte making Sebek bring in the eyes as well as the hands of Horus).

In the Egyptian tale of "Setna and the Magic Book," the king's son, Setna, obtains from the bed of the Nile a book written by the lunar Tehuti, which gives the reader power to enchant heaven, earth, and sea; to understand the language of birds, beasts, and fishes, and to bring the fishes to the surface of the water (*Records of the Past*, IV, p. 134). The Greek Amphion was celebrated for having "lured the fishes" (Clement of Alexandria, *Exhort.*, I, etc.), and primitive peoples in various parts of the world practised magical rites for causing fishes to permit themselves to be caught (see Frazer, *Golden Bough*, I, p. 23; II, p. 411). In the Assyrian account of the Descent of Ishtar to the underworld, the god Hea

creates a phantom of a man and causes it to deceive the goddess of the underworld, Nin-ki-gal, with various magical tricks, the chief of which is to "bring forth fishes out of the water of an empty vessel" (i. e., empty of fishes—*Records of the Past*, I, p. 148).

According to the Mangaia of Polynesia, the man-fish Vatea prepared an enormous net for the first six fishermen, who fished in vain day after day until they invoked the aid of Raka, god of the winds. Then their net was filled with such a multitude of fish that they could not hold it; but Vatea's son Tane helped them: the net was drawn ashore, and the fish counted—whence originated the art of reckoning (Gill, *Myths and Songs from the South Pacific*, p. 100). This myth apparently came to Polynesia from some ancient people having considerable astronomical knowledge; for Vatea appears to represent the cosmic god, with Tane for the sun, the six other fishermen for the remaining planets (including the moon), and the fish for the fixed stars as supposed to be definitely numbered. It is related of Pythagoras that he once observed a large draught of fishes; purchased them all, and had them returned to the water as a lesson to the spectators to spare even the lives of fishes and to refrain from eating them as well as other animal food (Plutarch, *Symp.*, VIII, 8; Apuleius, *Apolog.*, p. 209); and the philosopher told the exact number of the fishes in the net even while it was being drawn up, according to Porphyrius (*Vit. Pythag.*, 25) and Iamblichus (*Vit. Pythag.*, 8).

In several Old Testament texts it is said that Jehovah will multiply men "as the stars of the heaven" (Gen. xxii. 17; xxvi. 4; Ex. xxxii. 13; etc.); and we have already seen that the Hebrew *dag* = fish was "so called from multiplying abundantly." In the vision of Ezek. xlvii, where the Holy Land appears to be assimilated to the celestial regions, the prophet is taken to a great river or double river (the Jordan as a counterpart of the Eridanus with its double stream, northern and southern) that issues from beneath the sanctuary eastward; crosses "the east country" (Sept., "Galilee") and flows to the sea (the Dead Sea as a counterpart of that of the underworld). Of this river it is said that "a very great multitude of fish shall be there.... And it shall come to pass that fishers shall stand by it; from En-gedi even unto En-eglaim (places on or near the Dead Sea) there shall be a place for the spreading of nets; their fishes shall be after their kinds, as the fish of the Great Sea, a very great multitude" (Sept., *πληθος πολὺ σφόδρα*). Among the traditional miracles of Ezekiel is one of a multitudinous draught of fishes with which he fed the famished people (Epipha-

nius, *De Vit. et Mort. Prophet.*, etc.). In Jer. xvi. 16, Jehovah promises to send "many fishers" to fish the children of Israel from among the Gentiles; and according to Matt. xiii. 47, 48, "the kingdom of the heavens is like to a drag-net cast into the sea, of every kind (of fish) gathering together; which when it was filled, having been drawn up on the shore, and having sat down, they (the fishers) collected the good (fish) into vessels, and the corrupt they cast out."

Among the Synoptic Gospels the story of the multitudinous draught of fishes is found only in Luke (v. 1-11), the scene being in Galilee (cf. iv. 44), through which Ezekiel's river flows. Galilee is "the east country" of the Hebrew text, corresponding to the eastern quarter of the heaven as mapped by the ancient astrologers; and the Eridanus is in close connection with the eastern signs Pisces, Aries, and Taurus—in fact, there can be little doubt that this celestial river was sometimes considered a continuation of the Stream of Aquarius. Thus it is not improbable that the two fishes of Pisces suggested the two ships in Luke's story, where the draught of fishes is made near the shore of "the Lake of Gennesaret" or Sea of Galilee (= Circle—as if for the underworld sea); while one of the ships belongs to Simon Peter, who was early identified as the Apostle of Pisces—as shown in previous articles of this series. According to Luke, Jesus "saw two ships standing by the lake, but the fishermen having gone out from them, washing their nets. And having entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, he asked him to put off a little from the land; and having sat down, he taught the multitudes from the ship. And when he ceased speaking, he said to Simon, Put off into the deep and let down your nets for a haul. And answering, Simon said to him, Master, through the whole night having labored, we have taken nothing; but at thy word I will let down the net. And having done this, they (Simon and his partners) enclosed of fishes a great multitude (*πλήθος πολύ*, the words of Ezekiel in the Sept., without the final *σφόδρα* = very); and their net was breaking. And they beckoned to the partners in the other ship, that coming they should help them; and they came, and filled both the ships (with the fishes), so that they were sinking. And having seen (all this), Simon Peter fell at the knees of Jesus, saying, Depart from me, for a man, a sinner, am I, Lord. For astonishment laid hold on him and all those with him, at the haul of the fishes which they had taken; and in like manner also (astonishment laid hold on) James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, Fear not, for henceforth thou shalt be catching men (in a proselyting sense). And having brought the ships to land,

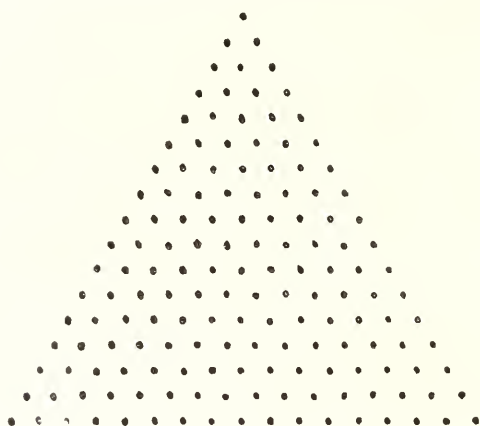
leaving all, they followed him" (cf. Mark i. 16, 17 and Matt. iv. 18-20, where the Apostles who thus follow are Peter and Andrew—the latter belonging to Aquarius in the astronomizing view).

The final chapter in the Gospel of John as we have it has long been recognized as an addition to the original book, which evidently ended with the last verse of chap. xx. In xxi. 1-14, is found a variant of Luke's multitudinous draught of fishes. After his resurrection Jesus appears to seven disciples—Peter, Thomas, Nathaniel, the sons of Zebedee (James and John), and "two others" unnamed. "Simon Peter says to them, I go to fish. They say to him, We also come with thee. They went forth and went up into the ship immediately, and during the night they took nothing. And morning already being come, Jesus stood on the shore; the disciples, however, knew not that it was Jesus. Therefore says Jesus to them, Little children, have ye any food (cf. Luke xxiv. 41)? They answered him, No. And he said to them, Cast the net to the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast, therefore, and no longer were they able to draw it, from the multitude of the fishes. Therefore that disciple (John) whom Jesus loved says to Peter, The Lord it is. Therefore Simon Peter, having heard that it is the Lord, girded on his upper garment, for he was naked, and cast himself into the sea (and swam to the shore). And the other disciples in the little ship came, for they were not far from the land, but somewhere about two hundred cubits (cf. the two hundred denarii in the multiplication story), dragging the net of fishes. Therefore when they went up on the land they saw a fire of coals lying, and fish lying on it (the last phrase probably interpolated), and bread. Jesus says to them, Bring of the fishes which ye took just now. Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to the land, full of large fishes, a hundred and fifty-three; and though there were so many, the net was not rent. (And evidently some of these fish were then cooked on the fire.) Jesus says to them, Come ye, dine. But none of the disciples ventured to ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it is the Lord. Therefore comes Jesus and takes the bread and gives (it) to them, and the fish in like manner"—doubtless from Luke xxiv. 30, where the resurrected Jesus gives bread to his disciples, while in verse 42 the disciples give Jesus a piece of broiled fish and a honeycomb. Practically all the elements of the story in John are derived from Luke, and there can be no doubt that all the fishes that were cooked and eaten belonged originally to the multitudinous draught.

The counting of the fishes has a close parallel in the story of Pythagoras and the draught of fishes, as above cited. Jerome, in his *Commentary on Eschiel* (xlvii), tells us that "the writers upon the nature and characteristics of animals, and among them the excellent Cilician poet Oppian, say that there are one hundred and fifty-three species of fishes; all these (as Jerome adds) were caught by the Apostles, and none were uncaught, just as great and small, rich and poor, all sorts of men, were drawn to happiness out of the (figurative) sea of the world"—as if all species of fishes belonged to the Sea of Galilee! According to the Talmud, in the East there are not less than seven hundred kinds of unclean fishes alone (*Hul.*, 63b), but none in the West (*Ab. Zarah*, 39a); while modern naturalists recognize thirty-six species in the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan. Oppian's poem on fishing, the *Halicutica*, does not specify any number of species of fishes, nor can one hundred and fifty-three be found in the poem; but nevertheless it is just possible that some of the other writers to whom Jerome refers did specify this number. Pliny gives expression to the general belief of his time when he says that "in the sea and in the ocean, vast as it is, there exists nothing that is unknown to us; and, a truly marvelous fact, it is with those things which nature has concealed in the deep that we are best acquainted"—adding what he accepted as the exact number of species of fishes (*H. N.*, XXXII). But in the extant manuscripts of his *Historia Naturalis* that number is variously given as 144, 164, and 176, never as 153; nor is the last number found in any such connection in any ancient writer except Jerome. We can only be certain, therefore, that some of the ancient naturalists did enumerate about as many as one hundred and fifty-three species of fishes; but there is a possibility that this number in the supplement to John's Gospel was fixed upon in agreement with the one hundred and fifty-three divisions of the Pentateuch (and Prophets) as sometimes employed by the Jews for reading in the synagogues on successive Sabbaths in a cycle of three years (Maimonides, *Jad Ha-Chazaka Hilchoth Tephilla*, XIII, 1; cf. Acts xiii. 15, xv. 21; Luke iv. 16; and see M'Clintock and Strong's *Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature*, s. v. "Haptarah"). Each of these divisions or lessons from the Pentateuch is subdivided into seven sections, read severally by seven persons, the first three of whom represent the three great divisions of the nation—the priests, Levites, and civil authorities—while the last four readers are selected with less care (Maimonides, *ibid.*, XII, 7; *Mishna*, "Megilla," IV, 2). Thus the seven Apostles who make the multitudinous draught, with only the first three mentioned

by name, correspond to the $3 + 4 = 7$ readers of a lesson. But the primary suggestion for the group of seven Apostles is perhaps to be sought in the seven planets, which are represented by the seven fishermen who make the multitudinous draught and count the fishes in the Mangaian myth; and the Johannine writer's introduction of seven Apostles was probably influenced by the fact that the Hebrew word *dag* = a fish has the numerical value of $4 + 3 = 7$.

There is also a probability that the one hundred and fifty-three fishes were recognized in the astronomical view as belonging to the period during which the waters of the Hebrew Deluge "prevailed." In Gen. vii. 11, 24, this period is put at "one hundred and fifty days", from the beginning of the rain on the 17th of the second



PYRAMID OF THE 153 FISHES.

(According to Augustine, *Epistolae*, LV, 31.)

month to the landing of the ark on Ararat (on the 17th of the seventh month); in other words, it comprised five months of thirty days each in a year of 360 days. But if we substitute a year of 366 days, with its months alternately of thirty and thirty-one days, we have 153 days for the five months beginning with its second month of thirty-one days. The Biblical second month is doubtless Ijar or Zif, the second of the sacred year, during which fell the so-called "latter rains." But there is no rainy season of five months in Palestine; the Biblical Deluge having been derived from Babylon, where the spring rains cause the flooding of the Euphrates and Tigris that appears to have been reckoned as of five months' duration. And as Peter, the Apostle of Pisces and the spring equinox, is the chief of the fishermen in Luke's story, there is a natural sug-

gestion for the association of the days of the Deluge with the draught of fishes. Augustine (*Epist.*, LV, 17, 31) says that the number of the fishes in the Gospel of John pertains to the time when the last enemy, Death, shall be destroyed (apparently as was the earth by the Deluge): and he adds that this number is connected with the mystic seventeen, as in the case of an equilateral triangle composed of 153 elements, with seventeen on each side and the remainder filled in symmetrically (as in the accompanying figure—cf. the 17th day of the months in the Hebrew Deluge legend, and note that $9 \times 17 = 153$). Augustine also refers the one hundred and fifty-three fishes to the Church as evolved from the Law and the Spirit, in accordance with Philo's principle of the fulfilment



JESUS AS THE GOOD SHEPHERD,

surrounded by lambs and fishes. Fresco of Cyrene. (From Kraus, *Geschichte der christlichen Kunst*, I, p. 85.)

of the potentiality of any number (e. g., that of 3 is $1 + 2 + 3 = 6$). Thus 10 is assigned to the Law (for the commandments) and 7 to the Spirit (see Rev. i. 4; iii. 1), while $10 + 7 = 17$, the fulfilment of which is $1 + 2 + 3 \dots + 17 = 153$ for the Church.

There can be little doubt that the meal of bread and fishes in the supplement to John represents a primitive Christian Eucharist as replacing the Passover supper of bread and lamb; with the fishes referring to Pisces as having become the sign of the spring equinox about the beginning of the Christian era, while the lamb belonged to Aries as the sign of the same equinox in the preceding precessional period of some two thousand years. Among the oldest representations of Jesus, as in the Roman catacombs, we sometimes

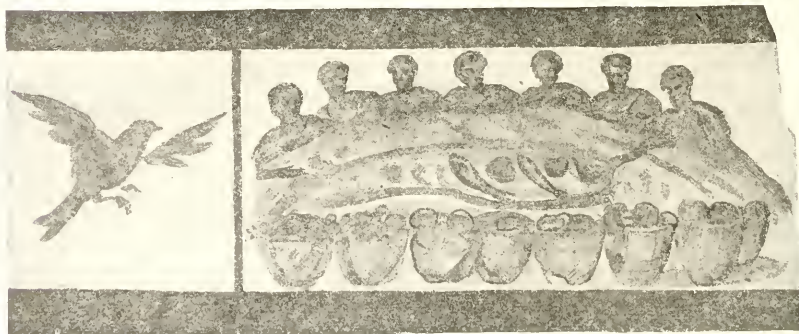
find him with seven lambs; sometimes with seven fishes; sometimes with both lambs and fishes in the same representation—while one



JESUS AS THE GOOD SHEPHERD

with seven lambs, seven stars, etc.

example with seven lambs includes seven stars ($4 + 3$) above the head of Jesus (see accompanying figures). According to early tradition, "the paschal (Passover) pickerel" was substituted by Jesus for the lamb at the Last Supper (Farrar, *Life of Christ*, p. 18).

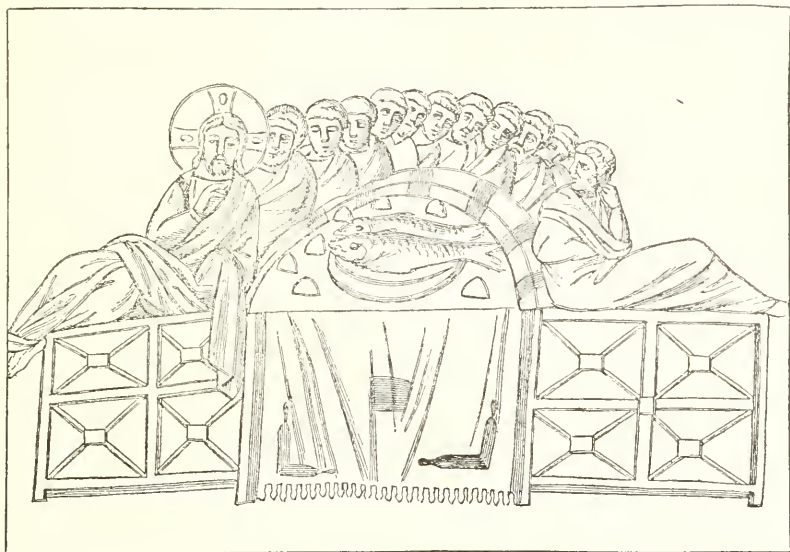


TWO EARLY CHRISTIAN EUCHARISTS.

with seven participants and two fishes. (In the Cemetery of Calixtus, Catacombs, Rome.)

A meal of fish and bread is frequently represented in the catacombs, sometimes with two fishes and seven diners (Lundy, *Monumental*

Christianity, p. 369, fig. 169, etc.) ; while in a mosaic of the Church of St. Apollinaris at Ravenna, said to be the oldest known representation of the Last Supper, Jesus and eleven Apostles (Judas having left) are reclining at a table on which are two large fishes and seven loaves of bread (Garrucci, *Storia dell' arte cristiana*, IV, Plate 250, No. 1). The two fishes, bound together by their tails as in the usual figure of Pisces, are also represented in the catacombs, sometimes on either side of an anchor or trident (Boldetti, *Osservazioni*, II, p. 370, etc.).



EARLIEST KNOWN REPRESENTATION OF THE LAST SUPPER. With seven loaves and two fishes. Mosaic in St. Apollinaris, Ravenna. (From Garrucci, *Storia dell' arte cristiana*, IV, Plate 250. No. 1.)

The sun is sometimes conceived as a fish, as we saw above; and the Messiah (= Jesus), "son of Joseph," is called Dag = Fish in the Talmud (see Buxdorf, *Synod. Jud.*, XXIV). The name Jesus is a Grecized form of Joshua (= Saviour), the Old Testament prophet of that name being the son of Nun (= Fish—at least in the extant form of the word, as apparently of Assyrian origin); and thus some of the Rabbis, assigning the incarnation of the Messiah to the future, said that he would be born of a fish—that is to say, "they expected his birth under the constellation of the Fishes, on which account the Jews were long accustomed to immolate a fish in expiatory feasts" (Drews, *Christ Myth*, Eng. ed., p. 141,

note). In other words, the Jews recognized the Messiah of the Christian era as the solar incarnation of the Pisces precessional period; Abrabanel and others affirming that his birth would occur at the time of a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in Pisces (see Münter, *Sinnbilder*, p. 49). Jesus is often represented by a fish in the Roman catacombs (Didron, *Christian Iconography*, ed. 1851; Vol. I, pp. 344-367, etc.); Tertullian says that "we little fishes, after the example of our ΙΧΘΥΣ (= Fish), Jesus Christ, are born in water"—i. e., baptized (*De Bapt.*, I, 1); Origen says that Christ is figuratively called "Fish" (*In Matt.*, III, p. 584), and from the word ΙΧΘΥΣ the early Christians made the acrostic—'Ιησοῦς Χρῆστος Θεοῦ Υἱὸς Σωτήρ = Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour—which first appears in the *Sibylline Oracles* (VIII, 217-250), and is frequently quoted from them, as by Augustine (*De Civ. Dei*, XVIII, 23) and Eusebius (*Or. Con. ad Coetum SS.*, XVIII).